

GREENWorks

Ideas for a Cleaner Environment

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GREENING YOUR VALENTINE

Are you and your Valentine on the same page when it comes to the environment? It's not surprising to learn that many couples have different opinions on "being green." This is especially true given the number of daily go green messages we all hear about the car we drive, the food we eat, the energy we use, and the weather outside. Disputes and frustrations can arise from differences of opinion on how green to be.

So if it is one of your goals to "green your Valentine," take it slow. Just remember that any type of change is hard for people to accept and darn near impossible for some. Perhaps you can start with some simple things. Keep in mind that, no matter what changes you are implementing, it helps to explain how these efforts will not only benefit the environment, but also *your* lives, either by saving money or even eliminating real health risks. Below are a few ideas that may help couples to be green together.

Recycle: To many, recycling is second nature, but to others it's a hassle. They may not have grown up recycling so they just don't do it. The key is to make recycling in your home as convenient as possible. Take responsibility for rinsing the containers or emptying the bins until it becomes a part of the normal routine. Your partner will see that it's not difficult or too time consuming. Besides, with many towns adopting pay-as-you-throw policies, recycling will clearly save your family money by reducing the trash you throw away.

Eat Local: Beware that the subject of food can be a very personal one and possibly one of the most difficult things to change about your loved one. So don't expect them to become a vegetarian overnight. Try taking in a local farmer's market (yes, even in the winter!) as a fun event together. This supports your neighboring farmers and reduces energy consumption required by the global transport of goods. Food from your farmer's market is healthier and fresher because it hasn't traveled thousands of miles to reach your dinner table. For a list of New Hampshire farmers' markets visit <http://www.nh.gov/agric/publications/documents/WinterFM.pdf>.

Green Clean: Housework can be a sore subject for any couple regardless of how green the products you use. Again, many people have preferences for certain products because that's what their mom used, end of story. But if your partner is feeling nostalgic, introducing some old school (non-toxic) household cleaners like baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice could be the answer. Don't forget to explain that many cleaners contain harmful toxins that are not only bad for the environment, but bad for your family to be breathing or touching.

Greening your Valentine may take some time. All of us can make changes to our daily lives that would be beneficial to the environment, so don't place any unfair expectations that your loved one is going to suddenly wake up one morning and decide its time to save the planet. But maybe

they could start with your Valentines Day gift of organically raised roses, fair trade chocolates and a homemade card from recycled paper – it can't hurt to suggest, right?

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